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Freshly prepared skins of birds or rodents, when properly pinned to the shelves, withstand the jolting of carrying by hand and of ordinary travel in good shape, but will not resist the attacks of the average "baggage smasher," of course.

The cut shows a couple of thin perpendicular strips in the rear of the case. These are so placed as to allow the passage of air behind the shelves for the better ventilation and more rapid drying of specimens. The wire side of the screen door must always be turned to the rear so that the frame will present something for the fingers to grasp in handling.

A lock is put on the solid door, and two pieces of metal are secured in slots so as to drop down and act as catches. When the outer door is removed for drying specimens these will also keep the screen door in place. These catches, as shown in the cut, could be improved upon, or small flat bolts might be set in the door instead, so long as everything is flush with the surface. Some sort of a trunk handle on the top of the case, and a leather "tab" fastened with screws on the door to aid in handling it, complete the job.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco.*

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## RECENT LITERATURE

**Dixon, Joseph.** CONTROL OF THE COYOTE IN CALIFORNIA. Berkeley, University of California Press, Bull. no. 320, College of Agriculture, pp. 379-397, 7 figs., April, 1920.

In this bulletin the author has succeeded admirably in presenting a concise and fair statement of the economic relations of the coyote in California and the measures proposed for its control. To those who would regret the passing of the coyote, Dixon's demonstration of the fact that "a coyote is not necessarily a bad citizen" will be welcome. With prime coyote pelts selling up to \$10 and even \$20 each the fur value of the animal is not to be minimized. Add to this the beneficial activities of the coyote in destroying noxious rodents, particularly ground squirrels, and it must be conceded that the economic value of the animal is a real and not an imaginary quantity. Of course, adverse testimony is not lacking. The coyote is stated to be the most destructive carnivorous animal now existing in California, and reference is made to depredations on deer, sheep, pigs, and calves. Furthermore there is, at times, grave danger of the spread of rabies through coyotes to horses, cows, goats, dogs, cats, and other domestic animals as well as to man. Consequently control measures are essential.

The bounty system is unreservedly condemned, as being vastly expensive, productive of endless fraud, and failing to give general or permanent relief. Coyote proof fences give good results under favorable conditions. The four most effective methods of destroying coyotes are stated to be trapping, poisoning with strychnine, digging out dens containing young, and shooting. It is Dixon's opinion, on the basis of results obtained in Nevada and parts of California, that cooperation in coyote control between the State and Federal governments through the Biological Survey is much superior to the bounty system. This work, supervised by the government, is carried on upon a half-and-half basis. Experienced trappers are employed on a salary and are not permitted to accept bounties from any source.

As a necessary result of the destruction of the coyote man will have to face the problem of accounting for the thousands of ground squirrels which the animals destroy each year, as Dixon clearly points out. Control measures breed control measures. Control in one direction throws nature out of balance and often gives rise to troublesome consequences which must be dealt with through additional control measures.

The case has recently been well stated by two British authorities. Watt (Journ. Ecol., vol. 7, Nov. 1919, pp. 201-202) cited herbivorous animals as a chief cause of failure of natural regeneration of the oak in Britain. As a result of the reduction in numbers of carnivorous animals there has been a general increase in rabbits, mice, moles, and certain birds. "Man by upsetting the balance of nature, and assuming control of what directly affected his own interests, is now paying the penalty in other ways, and must, having killed or suppressed the controllers, either assume total control himself or assist in such by a judicious encouragement of those animals he once considered his inveterate foes." The same point is made by Lankester, quoted by Watt, ". . . civilized man has proceeded so far in his interference with extra-human nature, has produced for himself and the living organisms associated with him such a special state of things by his rebellion against natural selection and his defiance of Nature's pre-human dispositions, that he must either go on and acquire firmer control of the conditions or perish miserably by the vengeance certain to fall on the half-hearted meddler in great affairs. We may indeed compare civilized man to a successful rebel against Nature who by every step forward renders himself liable to greater and greater penalties, and so cannot afford to pause or fail in one single step." (Kingdom of Man, 1911, pp. 31-32).

—Walter P. Taylor.

**Pohle, Hermann.** DIE UNTERFAMILIE DER LUTRINAE. (EINE SYSTEMATISCH-TIERGEOGRAPHISCHE STUDIE AN DEM MATERIAL DER BERLINER MUSEEN.) Archiv f. Naturg., 85 Jahrg. (1919), Abt. A, 9 Heft, pp. 1-247; 19 text figs., 10 plates. November, 1920.

The recent and fossil otters of the world are treated in this extensive monograph. An examination of the systematic part (pp. 1-174) leads one to believe that the material available to the author in many groups hardly justified so pretentious a work. But he has drawn liberally upon the literature of the group and has compiled tables of measurements, lists of localities, and descriptions of specimens from many sources. Seven new forms are described: *Lutra brunnea*, Pontianak, Borneo; *L. maculicollis kivuana*, Kissenje, Lake Kivu, German East Africa; *L. tenuis*, Lake Mohasi, German East Africa; *L. intermedia*, Sumatra; *L. lutra ceylonica*, Nuwara, Ceylon; *Amblyonyx cinerea fulvus*, Lao Key, Tonkin, Indo-China; and *Aonyx microdon*, Dorf Bomse, Kamerun, Africa.

The name *Latax lutris gracilis* Bechstein, 1800, is revived, erroneously, to replace *Latax lutris nereis* Merriam, 1904. Bechstein's name was based upon the "slender otter" of Pennant, described from "Staten-Land." Dr. Leonhard Stejneger has called the reviewer's attention to the fact that the Staten-Land of Pennant is without doubt the most southern island of the Kurile group, north of Japan; so named by its discoverer, de Vries, a Dutch navigator, in 1643. The name *gracilis* for a sea-otter is thus a synonym of *lutris*. In this connection it